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Latin America Report

(FOUO 13/79)



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ARGENTINA

UPDATED PUCARA ANNOUNCED IN 'DEFENSA'

Madrid DEFENSA in Spanish Aug-Sep 79 p 64

[Article by Alberto Carbone: "A New Argentine Plane: The Pucara B"]

[Text] The FMA (Military Aircraft Factory) of Argentina presented at the Le Bourget Show a new--"B" (for Bravo)--version of the IA-58 Pucara plane. The first model, the "A," was exhibited at the preceding Le Bourget Show 2 years ago, as well as at the last showing of the British Farnborough aeronautical industry.

The Pucara is a metal monoplane with a low cantilever wing, a T-empennage, twin turboprop engines and a retractable tricycle landing gear. It has been built on aluminum-alloy and magnesium- and steel-alloy materials which conform to MIL HDBK-5 specification. It is characterized as a multipurpose attack plane whose primary mission is offensive reconnaissance over sea and land and tactical fire support, being capable of effectively covering anti-insurgency missions. It should be pointed out that the Pucara was combat tested during the "Independencia" operation mounted by the Argentine Army in the northern province of Tucuman in 1974-76 to eliminate a center of rural guerrilla (see DEFENSA No 13).

The Pucara Bravo is an improved version of the type "A" with respect to the communications system and to an increased capacity to carry armament. The radio and navigational system was doubled in the Bravo, which enables either of the two crewmen of the Pucara to operate it. Moreover, the Bravo was equipped with an intercommunication system to insure contact between the crewmen and the ground crew after the plane is started.

The new plane can carry 280 30-mm rounds, 57 2.75-in rockets and 880 7.62-mm cartridges, while the "A" carries 530 30-mm rounds and 580 7.62-mm cartridges. Total production of the Pucara--whose price per unit, without options, is about \$2 million--will be 60 aircraft for the Argentine Air Force (FAA) and 40 for sale abroad. The FMA will deliver 14 aircraft during the remainder of this year, 25 in 1980 and 33 in 1981. During the show,

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Argentina and Venezuela began negotiations which should culminate in the installation of a Pucara assembly line at the latter. The Venezuelan Air Force (FAV) aspires to provide that country with its own aeronautical industry, and the intention is apparently to start with the construction of the Pucara under license.

The Dominican Air Force (FAD) also showed interest in the Pucara, and negotiations are underway for the acquisition of a certain number of aircraft from the FMA.

These possible sales in Latin America contrast with the failure of the sale of three Pucara planes to Mauritania negotiated 1-1/2 years ago. The deal fell through because of the problems of political stability in that African country. From what could be gathered at the show, the FMA is currently involved in a project to remodel and expand in which the cooperation and participation of private enterprises, whether Argentine or foreign, is not discounted. On this score, contacts were made with European aeronautical enterprises concerning the re-equipping of FMA, although no agreement has been reached for the time being because of differences of opinion as to what type of production line would be adopted.

In addition to planes, the FMA plans to produce air armament--including ammunition and rockets--and various accessories such as parachutes. The transformation of the FMA into a new type of state enterprise is also foreseen in order to be able to make room for private concerns in this manner, although the Argentine government will hold the majority of the capital stock.

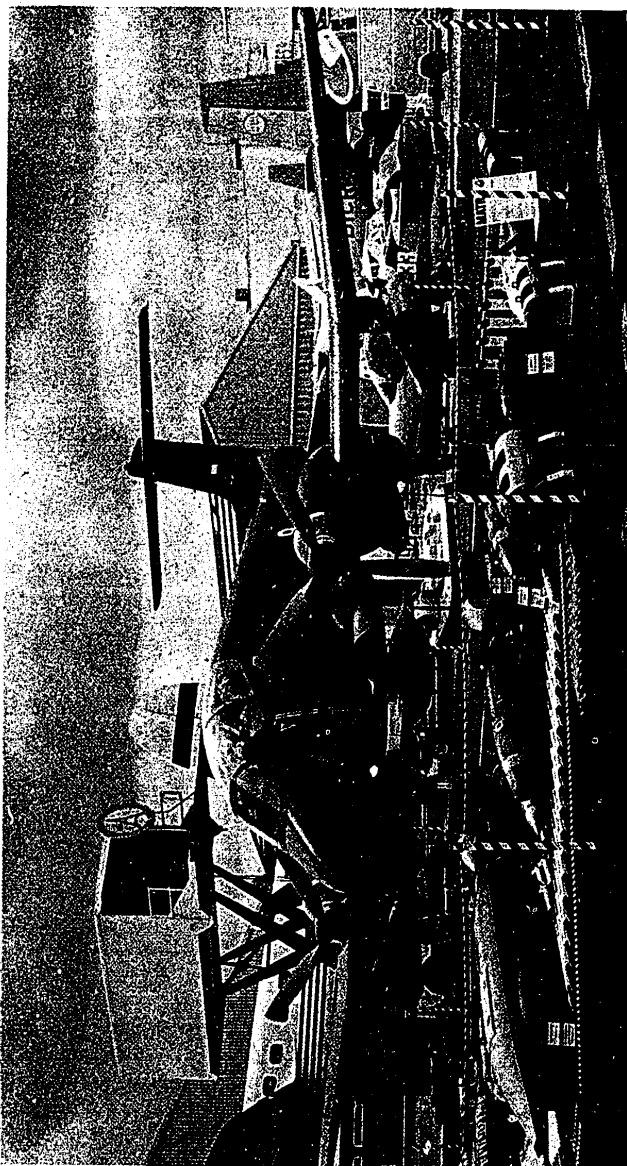
The most ambitious project of the FMA and the FAA is a jet plane evolved from the Pucara. This new model, intended to perform advance trainer and tactical support roles, would have a configuration similar to the IA-58, differing only in that its wing is placed high while the Pucara's is low.

Another project under development by the FMA is a radio-controlled drone designated IA-X-59, which has already made several test flights.

Besides the planes of Argentine design (34 since 1931, 9 of which were built in a series, for a total of 600 units), the FMA also produced and still produces aircraft under license such as the Beechcraft T-34 Mentor, the Morane Saulnier 760 Paris and Cessna models.

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Twin-turboprop engine Pucara, the Argentine anti-insurgency plane.

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ARGENTINA

OSCAR COSENTINO WRITES ON STRATEGIC ROLE OF MALVINAS ISLANDS

Madrid DEFENSA in Spanish Aug-Sep 79 pp 4, 5

[Article by Benjamin Oscar Cosentino, of the Argentine Navy: "The Strategic Value of the Malvinas Islands"]

[Text] Although the current trend of military thought attaches a very low probability to the occurrence of an all-out nuclear conflict between East and West, its mere existence as a hypothesis makes it worthy of consideration at least on a theoretical basis.

The probability that the majority of treatise writers indicate as the most realistic is that nuclear destruction gets completely out of control and both adversaries end up in such a state of destruction that it makes no sense to talk of "winning" the war. More problematical still would be that there might be a second phase in which the Western Oceanic alliance would make use of the proverbial recuperative power that enabled it to win two world wars.

This hypothesis is extremely aleatory, particularly in relation to the role that might be played by the American countries, because of the difficulty of making a projection on the basis of such an apocalyptic event.

But if such were not to happen and the two superpowers were able to withstand the first blow and its retaliation, a period of prostration and recovery would ensue in which both would have to resort to their allies and, via interior lines--land and river for one and sea for the other--build up their forces sufficiently to continue the war and "win it," if the result could be called that.

That was the classic posture of the United States during the decade of the 'Fifties: it guided the activities of the U.S. Navy for many years and persists even at present, although in a very limited fashion, in its relations with Latin American navies.

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In this hypothesis, the Panama Canal is considered very vulnerable--practically indefensible against a missile attack--and therefore would very probably be rendered useless from the outset.

The sea lines of communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific would revert to the route of Cape Horn and the Strait of Magellan, and then the Malvinas Islands would regain their strategic importance because of their equidistant location from the focal points that its approach and access routes represent.

It could be argued that the required naval operations could be launched with support in the continent (Rio Gallegos) and on Isla Grande of Tierra del Fuego (San Sebastian, Puerto Espanol, Ushuaia). This is correct in regard to the coastal navigation and trade lanes.

But their location 200 miles from the aforementioned focal points on the ocean approach routes represents an appreciable advantage, particularly for launching from Port Stanley the indispensable naval air reconnaissance and the necessary antisurface and antisubmarine forces for the protection of maritime traffic (reconnaissance in depth for nuclear submarines).

More important still is to deny the use of the islands to the enemy. The archipelago in question is full of inlets and fiords which would provide ideal havens and springboards for submarine patrols and surface units. Its numerous islands and islets will hinder high-altitude airborne radar reconnaissance and make necessary costly low-altitude search operations to ascertain that there are no enemies.

Even if they were not in the hands of the enemy but of a country that assigns a low priority and few resources to the surveillance of the islands, which is the same as tolerating their clandestine use, they represent a big potential danger and an additional rise in the cost of our own operations.

If our country or the Latin American bloc were not to intervene directly in the conflict, our responsibility would not lessen because the islands dominate Argentine waters--which cover the continental shelf on whose eastern edge they lie--from the east. They, therefore, become the only valuable frontier defense post of our territorial waters.

It should be added that there is a southern approach route from the Far East which makes it possible to enter the South Atlantic from the east, between the Antarctic ice and the Kerguelen Islands. Though the future importance of this access cannot be foreseen for the time being, its significance should not be disregarded; the relative location of the Malvinas Islands is of strategic value for its defense.

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Summing up the foregoing, we can say that the Malvinas Islands are valuable for naval strategy in a world conflict, particularly in the realm of operational strategy, both for the purpose of protecting allied sea lines of communication (if a belligerent) and of maintaining our sovereignty over Argentine waters (if a nonbelligerent).

Their importance lies on their geographical location, which makes it possible to shift eastward the focal merging points of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Local Conflicts

The crisis of the blocs and the significant failure of the international mechanisms to preserve peace have altered the situation of countries which do not have firm commitments or direct ties with the superpowers, but they can act under the protection of the military deadlock that the nuclear deterrent provides them.

At present, the developing countries can indulge in war adventures caused by conflicts of nationalist, ideological, territorial and even tribal nature that would have seemed absurd a short time ago.

This forces us not to discount conflicts with neighboring countries, no matter how improbable, as long as they can be possible.

It is not within the scope of this work to establish possible hypotheses or to analyze their probability. We can generalize them, for the sake of the analysis of the Malvinas Islands that occupies us, into two major alternatives: that the conflict forces us to operate toward the Pacific, or in the Atlantic.

In a conflict in which there would be a need to operate in the Pacific, the launching of enemy offensive operations from that ocean are bound to be expected.

Access to Argentine waters from the Pacific could be effected through the Strait of Magellan, the Strait of Le Maire, the southeastern access between Staten Island and the Malvinas Islands, and, lastly, over the long ocean frontier 200 miles offshore from our coastline stretching to the northern border with Uruguay.

Without going into legal and political considerations, the first two will be at least controllable at their mouths from the adjacent shores.

The southeastern access, on the other hand, represents a large opening 200 miles wide with severe weather conditions, particularly during the winter, a season when it is dark two-thirds of the time and low ceilings and ice formation are common, which hinders air reconnaissance.

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Although a way of penetration, the remainder of the maritime frontier north of the islands takes considerably longer time to transit because of the necessity to make a wide swing to avoid their proximity.

It is noted that the pivot of the defense of the southeastern and eastern accesses to Argentine waters is the Malvinas archipelago, from which an effective naval air reconnaissance can be mounted and operations to intercept surface or submarine forces can be launched with a marked economy of forces than if the same were carried out from the continent.

Let us suppose that, on the contrary, the Malvinas Islands were not available to us and that the situation in them were similar to the current one, that is to say, practically uninhabited and devoid of patrol and surveillance forces. Then the strategic value of the islands increases considerably because it would be very difficult--if not practically impossible--for us to deny its use to the enemy, who would find the ideal haven in its hundreds of inlets and islands [portion apparently mission] of maritime communications, south of Comodoro Rivadavia, and would seriously endanger logistic support for all our forces south of the Gulf of San Jorge. The mere suspicion of enemy forces clandestinely operating from the islands would affect maritime traffic and tie up the bulk of our naval forces, which would act with too little advance notice against a surprise incursion.

As long as our aircraft carriers do not have all-weather naval air capability and are restricted to daytime operations, a surface force which under those circumstances could be inferior would become a nighttime threat that would necessitate reconnaissance, intercept and attrition operations in order to achieve superiority in a maritime area usually considered as our domain.

If the conflict requires operations in the Atlantic, originating in or launched toward that area and gravitating to the north, the location of the islands would be outside of the main strategic operational direction. This would not detract from the significance of an eventual secondary effort by the enemy directed toward the south to flank our alternative sea lines of communication to South Africa.

In this case, an advanced point of support toward the east would represent a considerable economy of forces both in terms of reconnaissance and of protection of maritime traffic on that line of communication.

In conclusion, in a local conflict with operations directed toward the Pacific, the Malvinas Islands are of decisive importance to naval strategy as the pivot of our operations to maintain control over the southern and southeastern accesses to Argentine waters, and to prevent the flanking of our lines of communication in that theater. If the operations were in the Atlantic, from the northern maritime frontier, the strategic value would lie in the operational realm to prevent the flanking of our lines of communication toward the east.

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CUBA

WRITERS, CLERGYMAN, EX-PRISONER CENSURE CASTRO REPRESSION

Madrid CAMBIO 16 in Spanish 28 Oct 79 pp 111, 112, 115

/Text/ Vicente Echerri, born 31 years ago in Trinidad (Cuba), arrived in Barajas on 8 October. He was part of the latest group of people, who had been labeled persona non grata or were held as political prisoners, to be given permission as an act of charity by the Castro bureaucracy to leave the country after long years of waiting, anguish and persecution.

Echerri arrived in Spain on a 7-day visa. Following his stay here, he hopes to be reunited with his family in the United States. Enroute he will stop in Paris where he will deliver a dramatic message "get me out of here or I will commit suicide," from one of the best Cuban novelists and poets, Reinaldo Arena, author of "El mundo alucinante."

Echerri had a long wait. He made his first passport request in 1962. It was granted but the October crisis, the Soviet missile crisis, broke out and all exit permits were revoked.

The Calvary of a Christian in Cuba

Why did Echerri want to leave Cuba? Because he never accepted the Marxist ideology. He is a religious, a spiritual man and a member of the Anglican Church. He was a theology student preparing for the priesthood. Because of this he was discriminated against. He was refused admission to the university.

Completely isolated from Cuban society and politically mistrusted because he was president of the Friends of Great Britain Society (Echerri is an expert on English literature), in 1968 the young theology student attempted to leave Cuba clandestinely. He failed. He was shipwrecked for 10 days in the Caribbean until he was picked up by the Cuban coast guard.

He was tried and sentenced to a 2½-year prison term (2 years for attempting to escape and 6 months for being president of the Friends of Great Britain Society) which he served at the Las Villas prison. This prison is a concentration camp and a labor re-education center as well as a Marxist

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indoctrination center. Echerri was one of those who refused to accept "reeducation" which brought with it a reduction of sentences. Rejection meant harsher conditions but not forced labor. He used his time to study. To his knowledge of English he added French and French literature, thanks to the lessons given by another prisoner who was a professor in that discipline and, like him, opposed to Marxist ideology especially when it was imposed. In other words, they were opposed to being poisoned by it.

Following his release from prison in 1971, he again attempted to obtain permission to leave but it was denied.

He then resumed his theological studies at the only seminary still open in Cuba, the Inter-Confessional Seminary. Echerri told Xavier Domingo of CAMBIO 16 that "It is an insolent form of religious persecution under the guise of ecumenism."

Presbyterian "Police"

In short, each sect is prohibited from having its own educational center and, in addition, all students are subjected to real political surveillance as far as doctrine is concerned.

In short, the Inter-Confessional Seminary, Echerri reported, is under the strict control of the Presbyterian Church which is completely dedicated to the regime and many of its members are also members of the sinister and notorious G2 (state security).

In fact Vicente Echerri charged during a meeting that the seminary was a "political prison." He was expelled for his remarks.

Anglican Bishop Jose Agustin Gonzalez, defying persecution, took him in even though Echerri, as a result of everything that had happened to him, began to doubt his vocation and left his religious studies to dedicate himself to literature.

He renewed his efforts to obtain a passport and a visa which Spain finally granted him.

The Final Affront

On 7 October following a 17-year wait, Echerri was finally able to leave "that hell hole."

He says, "Believe me, when you have to wait 17 years to make a trip, life seems like an eternity." The first thing that took him by surprise on his arrival in Spain was the fast pace, the lively activity of the "developed world. I understand now that a slow pace is characteristic of underdevelopment."

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Prior to his departure he was to suffer a final affront. As he waited in the passenger lounge, he was approached by two police officers who motioned to him to follow them. They took him aside and said: "It would appear that you are taking documents out of Cuba that are not allowed to leave the country." He denied it but he was forced to open his suitcases. The documents which are not permitted to be taken out of Cuba turned out to be two manuscripts with his poems and chapters from a novel he is writing. Despite his protests, his works were seized. He was, however, able to carry out a short story that he was carrying in the pocket of his jacket.

"The poetry is written in a very intimate style," Echerri said. "It has nothing to do with politics and is of a very general nature. In any case, this is what they consider to be the most subversive."

According to the writer, "All the subjective and objective conditions, to use Marxist jargon, necessary for a formidable popular uprising in Cuba are present."

"Fidel Castro's unpopularity," he added, "has grown more than ever. Even those who not long ago supported the regime today publically speak of its mistakes."

Tito Was Censured

"The recent Sixth Summit of Nonaligned Nations in Havana only helped to discredit the regime which through GRANMA brazenly censured the speeches of numerous heads of state, including Tito's. The people, who had heard the speeches over the radio, were able to see through this and publically made fun of the government."

Echerri said that the following anecdote is significant: "At a recent meeting of a neighborhood committee, attended by police henchmen as is the custom, a man reported that he had visited 10 hospitals before finding one which would treat his wife who was hemorrhaging. At one hospital, there was no doctor. Another did not have the proper medication. The third did not have the necessary forms. The man concluded his story by saying: 'This happened because in this country everything is like shit.'"

"The surprising thing is that no one objected. Everyone nodded in agreement, including the party members and the man who made the complaint was not arrested."

"The poverty of the people," added Echerri, "is severe. Here is some data on rationing in Cuba:

Worse Than Slaves

"Rice, 2½ kilos per month; kidney beans, 1/2 kilo per month; peas, 1/2 kilo per month; tomatoes, a small can per month; lard, 1/4 kilo

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kilo per month; meat, 1/2 kilo every 12 days; coffee, 150 grams every 2 weeks." "Cuban dietitians have reported that this diet is worse than that of black slaves working on 18th Century Spanish plantations."

"Wages have remained at the 1958 level while the cost of living has risen considerably." "Contrast the poverty of the people," Echerri said, "with the high bourgeois lifestyle of the leaders, that is of the high-level leaders."

"They live in the great mansions in El Vedado, in the former residential district of Havana, use Mercedes Benz and enjoy the best food, beverages, trips and clothes."

"These privileges," the Cuban exile said, "are enjoyed by a very small caste of no more than 800 to 1,000 members."

"They take over the possessions of those who leave Cuba. They will receive the 80 Mercedes Benz that were purchased to transport the officials attending the Sixth Summit Conference. They will also get the new homes with heated swimming pools."

"Not long ago, Fidel himself was given a birthday present worthy of an Arab sheik: a new villa in El Vedado with a hydrotherapeutic swimming pool and playing fields."

Literary Stagnation

The fate of poet Armando Valladares is especially tragic. Following a long hunger strike in jail, he became paralyzed. A large international campaign for his release from jail and Cuba was launched. Cuban officials, however, do not want him to deplane in Barajas in a wheelchair. He will not be released until he has learned to walk again.

Other writers and poets are in desperate situations. These include Angel Cuadras who is in an underground prison and Reinaldo Arenas "who is on the verge of committing suicide and lives in abject poverty."

Arenas has tried to obtain permission to leave the country, but it has been denied, and he was told that his efforts would be useless.

A victim of a bizarre plot and shameless persecution since the publication abroad of his novel "El Mundo Alucinante" some 8 years ago, Arenas was implicated in a homosexual scandal. Following a quick trial with political overtones, he was put in jail.

Get Out or Die

Since his release 6 years ago, he has survived somehow without work or money. He is also under constant surveillance. Anyone seen with him is immediately questioned.

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The Cuban police are particularly concerned that Reinaldo Arenas continues to write. He sent this message to his European friends with Echerri: "I will not write again until I get out of Cuba."

Arenas accompanied Echerri to the airport and entrusted him with the following dramatic appeal for help to be delivered to European poets and intellectuals: "Get me out of here soon or I will commit suicide."

He lives on tea and hard cooked eggs which he obtains through the sordid system to which the regime has condemned the Cubans: The small volume sale of clothing and books.

Another group of poets and writers from Matanzas, composed of Roberto Valero, Haide Lopez, Teresita Herrera Muinez and Luis Marimon, was forced to sign a document 1 month before the Sixth Summit in which they agreed not to have anything published abroad. They were moved away from Havana so that they could not talk to foreign correspondents or diplomats.

With An Eyedropper

According to literary circles in Havana, the writer who until now supported the regime, Edmundo Desnoes, and who was given permission to leave Cuba for 2 months, has not returned after a 3-month absence. He allegedly is hiding somewhere in Europe and has no intention of returning. In fact, it is said that his name has been removed from personnel rolls at his place of employment and from the Union of Writers.

"Castro propaganda to the effect that anyone who wants to can leave Cuba is false," Echerri continued. "Exit visas are issued with an eyedropper. Only those ~~who~~ Cuban officials feel are completely irredeemable, undesirable or who they feel they have nothing to fear from once they are abroad are allowed to leave."

Ingrid Gonzalez, the wife of Reinaldo Arenas, has also been refused permission to leave. She is a great stage actress. She starred in the works of Triana and has been out of work since then. There is no question that the fact that his wife appeared in Triana's plays was used against Arenas even though the couple is separated. Also, charges made against Arenas by official poet Nicolas Guillen, who was backed by the UNEAC /National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba/, weighed heavily on his conviction. Arenas success abroad has displeased them.

First Day of Freedom As Seen by Vicente Echerri

"I felt like someone who sees his dream come true, as I watched from my seat on the Iberia airplane the Havana airport lights become smaller. The lights from an airport where a few minutes earlier I had felt the panic of seeing a door close when, 1 hour after undergoing a very thorough check, two customs police led me out of the passenger lounge and into a file room where they stripped me of letters and other personal papers

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(including two poems and a section of a novel I was working on) for the simple reason that they were obeying special orders which they could not explain why they had been issued.

"This sensation that I was hallucinating became more overpowering when I stepped off the plane at the Barajas airport, during the trip into the city, driving past the displays in the store windows and so forth...So that even today, 2 days after my arrival in Madrid and despite the warm hospitality that has been shown me, I still cannot believe that I have finally been able to get out of that inferno.

"Despite the high cost of living, the serious problem of inflation, the institutional crisis, the unemployment and so forth, these 2 days in Spain have assured me that the so-called 'free world' is not as the Marxist theorists have painted it. The respect for individual self-determination, the freedom of thought and expression (so eloquently manifested by the barrage of announcements and subway advertisements), the support that the average person can find for his opinions, and so forth, I find are established 'values,' common practices in this world that I have just arrived in. The daily exercise of these rights is completely unknown in the country I just left.

"I have left behind a sad, anguished and desperate people, the majority of whom feel trapped by a future that promises nothing more than servitude which inevitably is becoming more and more inhuman, a society where 'terror has no limits,' to use the words of one of our poets.

"Perhaps the most painful aspect is the plight of the Cuban young people who have been lost to Marxism (as some leaders have dared to confess in private) and are sinking into frustration and skepticism as they are harassed by a government that offers obedience as the only form of participation and forces them early on to lie, thereby pushing them towards hypocrisy and opportunism.

"On the other hand, it is embarrassing to discover that intellectuals who consider themselves to be honest and responsible, particularly those in Europe, the cradle of civilization where human values have been held in the highest esteem, have played the game, either through ignorance or political commitments, of the most monstrous, cunningly diabolical and oppressive dictatorship in the Americas. It is embarrassing to note that sensible men, writers and artists have become the accomplices of an unsuccessful and insane tyrant who has subjected our people for over 20 years to the most abominable despotism.

"I will never be able to feel completely happy or totally fulfilled as long as millions of my countrymen are suffering all the terrors of oppression. Therefore, as a new arrival, I believe it is my duty not to forget, not to remain silent about the suffering of my people and to tell the truth which no hypocritical humanitarian gesture by the Castro government will be able to hide."

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NICARAGUA

BRIEFS

SOMOZIST AGENT CAPTURED IN SOMOTILLO--Managua, 10 No (PL)--A Somozist agent charged with committing numerous crimes in the city of Leon was captured while trying to enter the country from Honduras. The criminal captured is Pablo Aguilera, former member of a military patrol that killed countless youths in that city and an aide to a Somozist official. Aguilera was captured in Somotillo, after entering Nicaragua clandestinely from Honduras. Regional military chief Commander Manuel Salvatierra has confirmed his arrest. [Text] [PA101948 Havana PRELA in Spanish 1938 GMT 10 Nov 79 PA]

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